

Overview

The Seattle Public Library's facilities include 26 branch libraries, the Central Library, a storage facility and leased shops space. In 2008, the Library completed the final building projects of the system wide "Libraries for All" (LFA) capital program. As a result of that \$290.7 million program, which was funded by a combination of public and private sources, Seattle had a new Central Library and four new branch libraries at Delridge, International District/Chinatown, Northgate and South Park. In addition, each of the 22 branch libraries that were in the system as of 1998 was renovated, expanded or replaced. The LFA program increased the amount of physical space that the Library maintains by 80 percent to a total of over 600,000 square feet.

The Library's buildings can be divided into four major categories.

1. Ten buildings that are designated historic landmarks, including 7 Carnegie-era libraries (built in the early 1900s) and three landmark modern buildings.
2. Branch libraries that are either LFA new construction (eight buildings) or non-landmarked buildings developed between the 1950s and the 1970s (three buildings).
3. Five small library branches that are essentially storefronts, four of which are part of larger buildings.
4. The Central Library, a 12-story 363,000 square foot building which serves as headquarters and hub of the library system. It houses the materials distribution system, Library administration, a 425-seat auditorium and public meeting rooms, large public areas for reading and access to 412 public computers, a data center housing system-wide servers, and the Central Library collection of books and materials.

Prior to development of a special levy intended to address a series of budget reductions and provide sustainable operating support for the Library, the Library's ongoing major maintenance program had steadily decreased in size and scope. Largely put on hold during the ten-year LFA capital renewal program, the Library reinstated the major maintenance program in 2007 when the majority of the new or refurbished libraries had reopened.

2014-2019 CIP

In 2012, voters approved a seven year Library Levy. One of the core areas of the levy is major maintenance. The 2014 Proposed CIP includes \$3.8 million for major maintenance (\$3 million from the Library Levy and \$780,000 of REET). The 2014-2019 Proposed CIP provides a base level of support for asset management in this critical period when all the library buildings pass the ten year mark from their LFA construction/renovation. Additionally, the \$3.8 million major maintenance program includes a \$500,000 Library initiative called Reimagining Spaces which restructures library spaces to address changes in how patrons use the library. This initiative will help the Library tailor services to neighborhood needs and adapt to transformations in how people access and use information. In 2014, Reimagining Spaces includes redeveloping the children's area and teen space at Rainier Beach, as well as reconfiguring reference/circulation desk areas at Central, Green Lake or West Seattle. The \$780,000 REET allocation also includes \$280,000 for safety and functional upgrades to Library escalators and elevators. The 2014 Proposed CIP also provides \$602,000 in REET funding for ADA access improvements for a total CIP budget of \$4.4 million.

2014-2019 Proposed Capital Improvement Plan

Summary of Upcoming Budget Issues and Challenges

The Library Levy provides critical resources that will support a responsible capital program and preserve welcoming library spaces throughout the city. The Library prepared a seven-year asset management plan to guide the capital element of the Levy proposal. The 2014 Proposed CIP major maintenance budget of \$3.8 million matches the projection of need calculated in that plan, as do the amounts indicated for 2015-2019. The Library is grateful for the opportunity to avoid deferred maintenance, keeping these community hubs in excellent condition.

Library buildings are the most intensively used city facilities in Seattle. The Central Library hosts approximately 2 million visitors annually, and library branches see another 5 million visitors. Even the quietest branch has more than 60,000 people walk through the door each year. The Library's historic landmark buildings have unique features such as brick facades, slate roofs and other details. It is important to use designs and materials consistent with their landmark status – all factors that increase major maintenance costs. The Central Library poses a different set of challenges. A building of its size, complexity and intensity of use requires significant annual major maintenance to preserve core functionality and continually improve building efficiency. All of these factors were considered in establishing the major maintenance component of the Library Levy.

The LFA improvement projects were completed on a rolling basis over the course of a decade. The Library has developed a projection of annual asset preservation requirements by focusing on the year in which each building reaches the 10-year mark from its LFA construction or expansion/renovation. This juncture provides a critical milestone for renewal of mechanical systems, building envelopes/roofs, and interiors. The Library does not anticipate needing to fund many wholesale replacements of systems at this point, but will need to replace, repair or upgrade components in order to maximize the useful life of the systems.

Thematic Priorities

Library CIP projects generally fall into one or more categories: asset preservation; operational efficiency, environmental stability and public service improvements; and safety and security.

Asset Preservation

The overriding priority of the Library's capital program is extending the useful life of the buildings as long as possible. Major repairs and replacement to roofs, building envelopes, HVAC and other critical building systems, doors, windows, flooring and casework are examples of the asset preservation items that must be funded through the Library's CIP budget. Over \$3 million of the Library's 2014 CIP can be wholly or partially classified as asset preservation work, including a package of improvements at the Columbia, Delridge and Green Lake branches. Green Lake and Columbia are century-old structures that were remodeled in 2004 during the extensive Libraries for All (LFA) bond initiative, while Delridge was newly-constructed in 2002 under LFA. As buildings reach and surpass the ten-year mark, they generally require attention to flooring, casework, finishes and restroom fixtures. Both Columbia and Green Lake will also receive fire alarm system maintenance, and Green Lake's exterior doors will be replaced. The Columbia branch is due for substantial roof, skylight and window renovation as well as exterior hardscaping improvements. Additional branch asset preservation work addresses doors, windows and parking lot maintenance. At the Central Library, projects include assessment and maintenance of both the atrium skylight and the exterior curtain wall (glass, framing, seals and anchor tethers); an upgrade of the uninterruptible power supply in the data center; and major maintenance/upgrade of the Central garage

door. Additional asset preservation work will address finishes, casework and minor restroom refurbishment.

Library Operational Efficiency, Environmental Sustainability and Public Service Improvements

The Library delivers direct services to the public, who expect highly functional and welcoming library buildings. Major maintenance work carried out under this priority supports:

1. implementation of new service models to help the library reduce operating costs while minimizing impact to the public;
2. improvements to enhance the environmental sustainability of Library buildings; and
3. efforts to better tailor services to neighborhood needs and changes in how people access and use information.

Within the latter theme, the Library expects to spend \$500,000 in 2014 reconfiguring the children's area and teen space at Rainier Beach, as well as reconfiguring reference/circulation desk areas at Central, Green Lake or West Seattle (contingent upon how scheduling aligns with other CIP projects at those branches). To enhance both environmental sustainability and patrons' experience, approximately \$204,000 is budgeted for hardscape/landscape/lighting improvements at several locations, including Rainier Beach, Lake City, Columbia and Central. The Library has allocated about \$476,000 in 2014 to efficiency and sustainability improvements at the Central Library, focused on the next phase of mechanical, engineering, plumbing and control system improvements to bolster fire safety and building efficiency.

Safety and Security of Public and Staff

Repairs and improvements that enhance the safety of library facilities are another priority guiding the Library's decision-making regarding allocation of its capital resources. ADA access improvements are one aspect of safety considerations. Roughly \$489,000 (of the \$602,150 allocation for the 2014 ADA Improvements Project) will be spent at the West Seattle branch to improve access to the library from the street and parking lot, as well as restroom accessibility upgrades. The balance of the 2014 ADA budget will be allocated to various branches for a variety of building access improvements.

For non-ADA-related safety/security projects (outside of the ADA Projects BCL), the Library has budgeted about \$389,000 for projects at the Northeast, Delridge, Green Lake, West Seattle branches and the Central Library. In addition, the Library will use a portion of its 2014 REET allocation for vertical transportation improvements, including the addition of escalator brushes and yellow edge striping of escalator steps at the Central Library.

Project Selection Criteria

In selecting major maintenance work to accomplish each year, the Library evaluates the preservation of building integrity, impact on safety to the public and staff, importance of the work to core library building functions, operational efficiency gains (both economic and environmental), and opportunities to improve or preserve service to the public.

The Library conducts condition assessments and updates information based on inspection by the capital program manager and facilities maintenance staff. The Library obtains professional evaluations of roofs, mechanical, HVAC and lighting systems to flag deficiencies and identify areas where the capital program may be able to reduce operating costs. Library public services managers develop proposals to improve the

functional use of library space. Such proposals are evaluated for feasibility, cost and urgency, and the capital program works with Library services managers to scope alternatives. The Library Leadership Team has ultimate responsibility for authorizing and prioritizing functional building modifications.

Many of the library facilities are open seven days per week, which requires careful planning and staging of projects to keep libraries open as much as possible while capital improvement work is underway. Having the flexibility to respond to emerging building issues is crucial.

Aligning Infrastructure with Planned Growth

The Library's facilities bring crucial services and provide a civic/cultural hub to 27 neighborhoods throughout the city. No new library facilities are currently planned.

The Library's shops, storage and materials handling are currently spread across two facilities and a leased space. The Library operates its automated materials handling (processing and sorting of returned collection items to fill holds and return items to their "home" location) out of the Central Library. Although the Library's current processing facility has almost reached its growth limit, a needs assessment is particularly critical as the nature of Library materials (paper versus electronic) is undergoing a sea change, while public use of Library facilities for a range of services is high. The Library anticipates conducting a needs assessment in the next few years, which might lead to a proposal for a multi-use facility that can support operations such as shops, storage, or materials processing during the six-year time horizon of the CIP.

As mentioned above, the Library is adapting to a rapidly changing information environment, where patrons are increasingly using the Library in new ways and accessing content digitally. Funding is vital for strategic, transformational improvements to Library facilities beyond baseline asset preservation. These strategic improvements will modify physical Library space with a threefold goal:

1. support learning experiences and programs for patrons, rather than serving as a location where a patron completes a transaction;
2. provide that experience in more flexible, adaptable spaces, responsive to service, patron, and demographic changes; and
3. in those spaces, reflect the expressed needs of individual neighborhoods and communities, while maintaining the Seattle Public Library brand.

The major maintenance funding afforded by the Library Levy provides for a responsible level of baseline asset preservation. It fills significant gaps in routine and major maintenance budgets in time to avoid or slow the accumulation and effects of deferred maintenance, wear and tear. However, levy funding is insufficient to fund the substantial costs associated with programmatically driven or reimagining projects, building additions and renovations, or replacement of major building systems at Central or the Library's larger branches. It is possible that large life-cycle projects may need to be addressed as the Central Library surpasses its fifteenth year of operation. The levy legislation states it is "the intent of the City Council and Mayor to continue to provide General Fund and REET support to the Library at 2012 service levels, adjusted proportionately based on increases or decreases to such support for comparable City departments." This additional support is crucial to the Library's ability to address major systems replacement and adapt libraries to the public's changing needs and uses during the life of the levy.

Seattle Public Library

Ultimately, the Library will need to work with the Mayor and City Council prior to the end of the seven year Library Levy to develop a strategy for continuing capital improvement program support for the Library, whether in the form of a renewed Levy, increased REET support, or some other mechanism.